

ART DUCKO

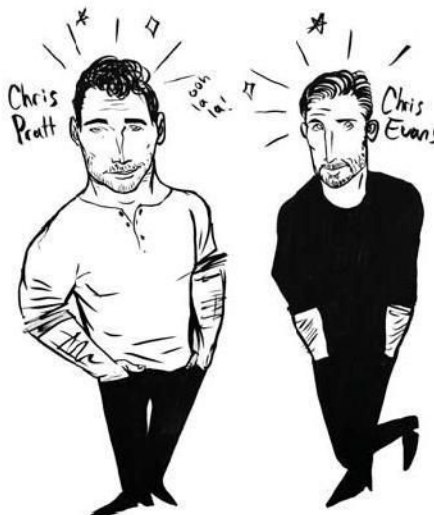
ISSUE 9



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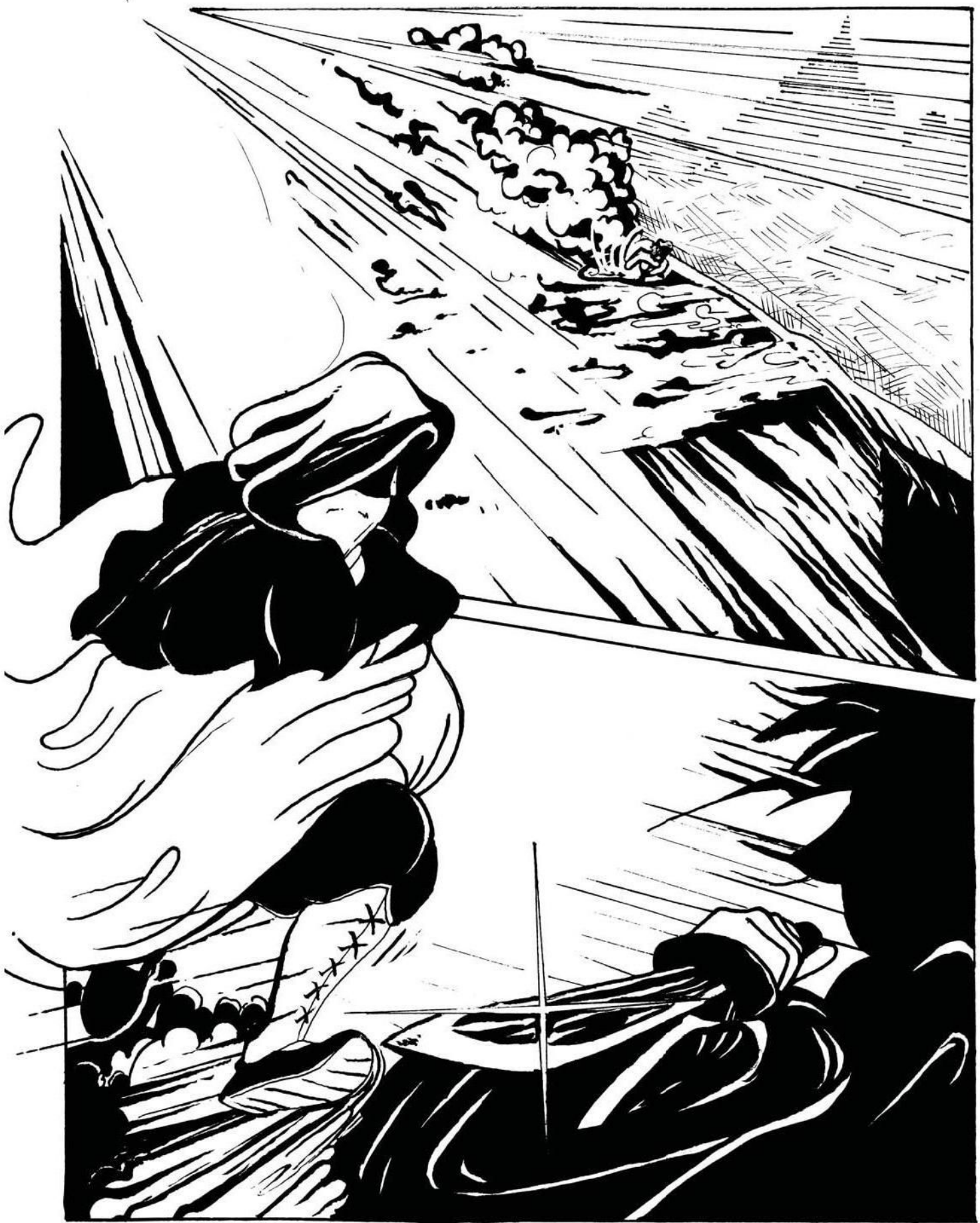
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By JACOB CLAMP









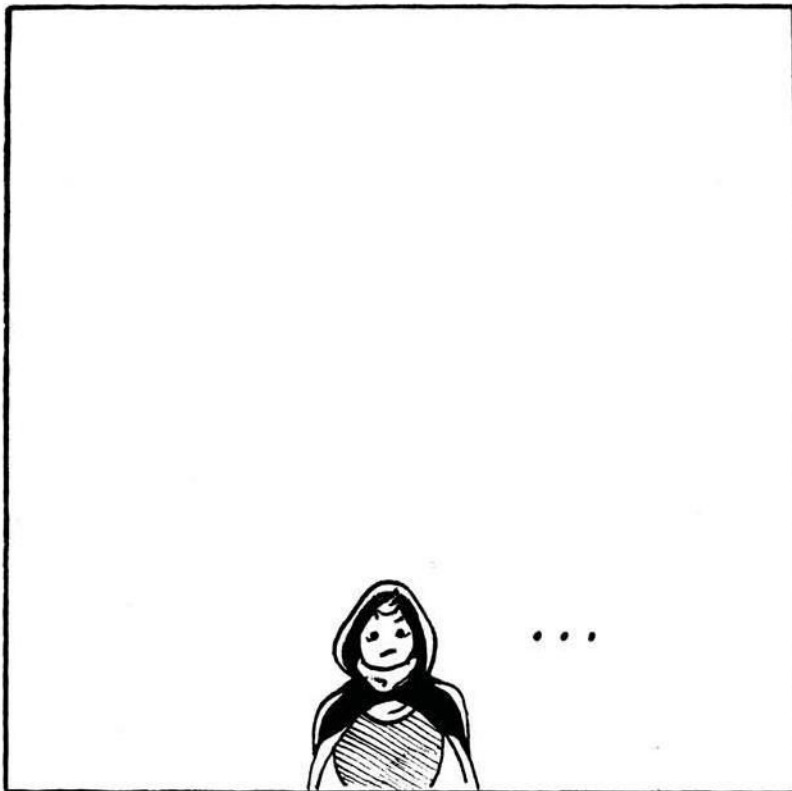


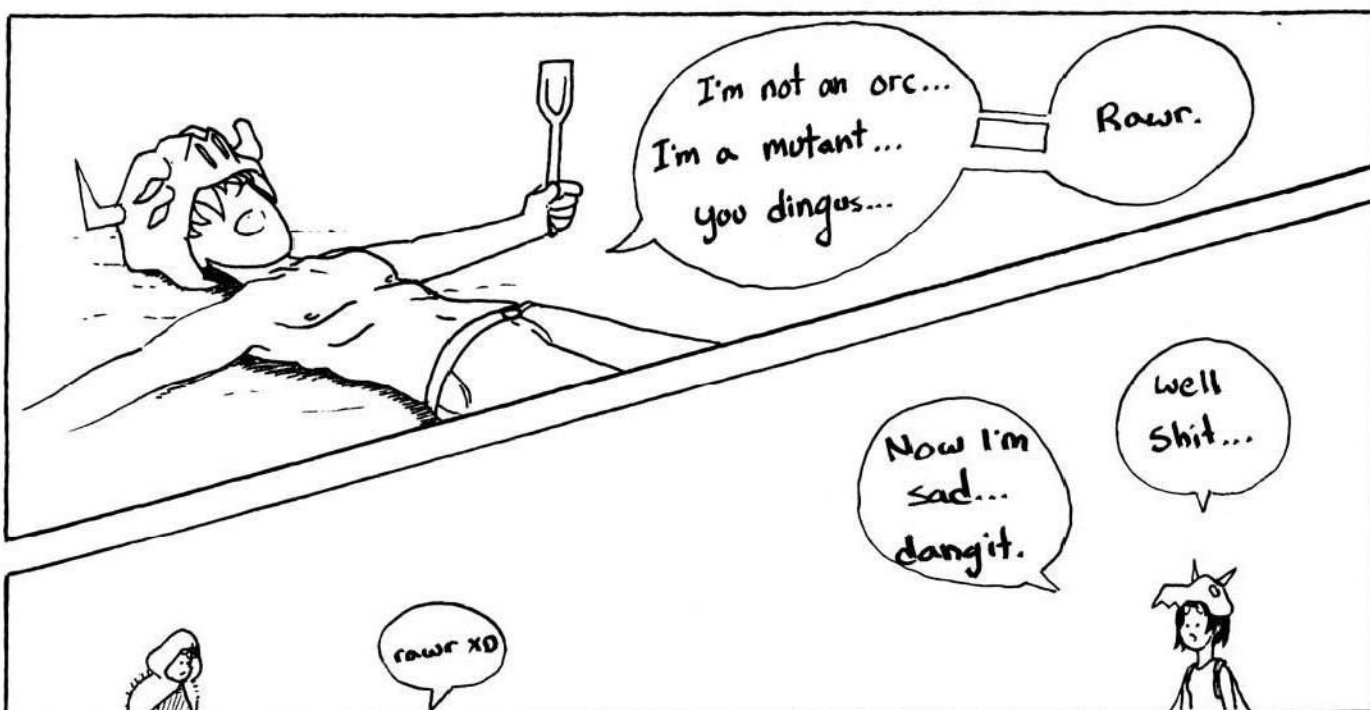
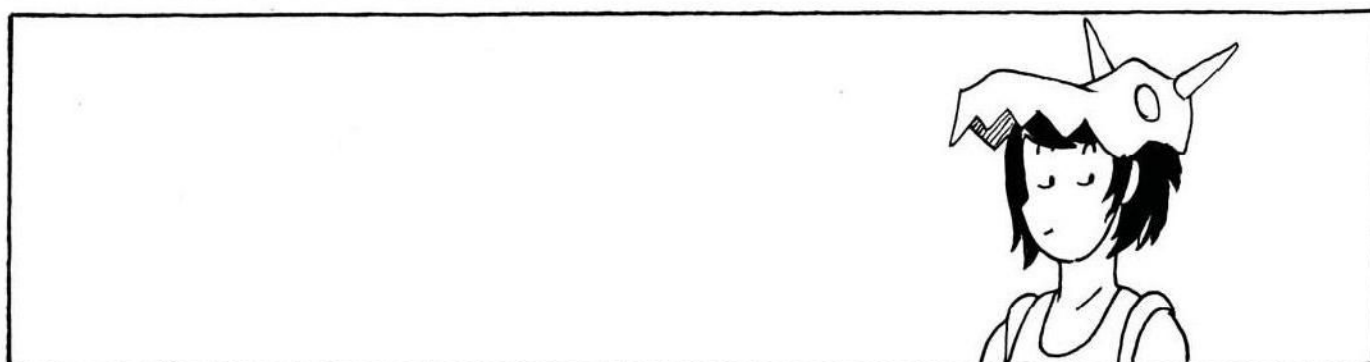
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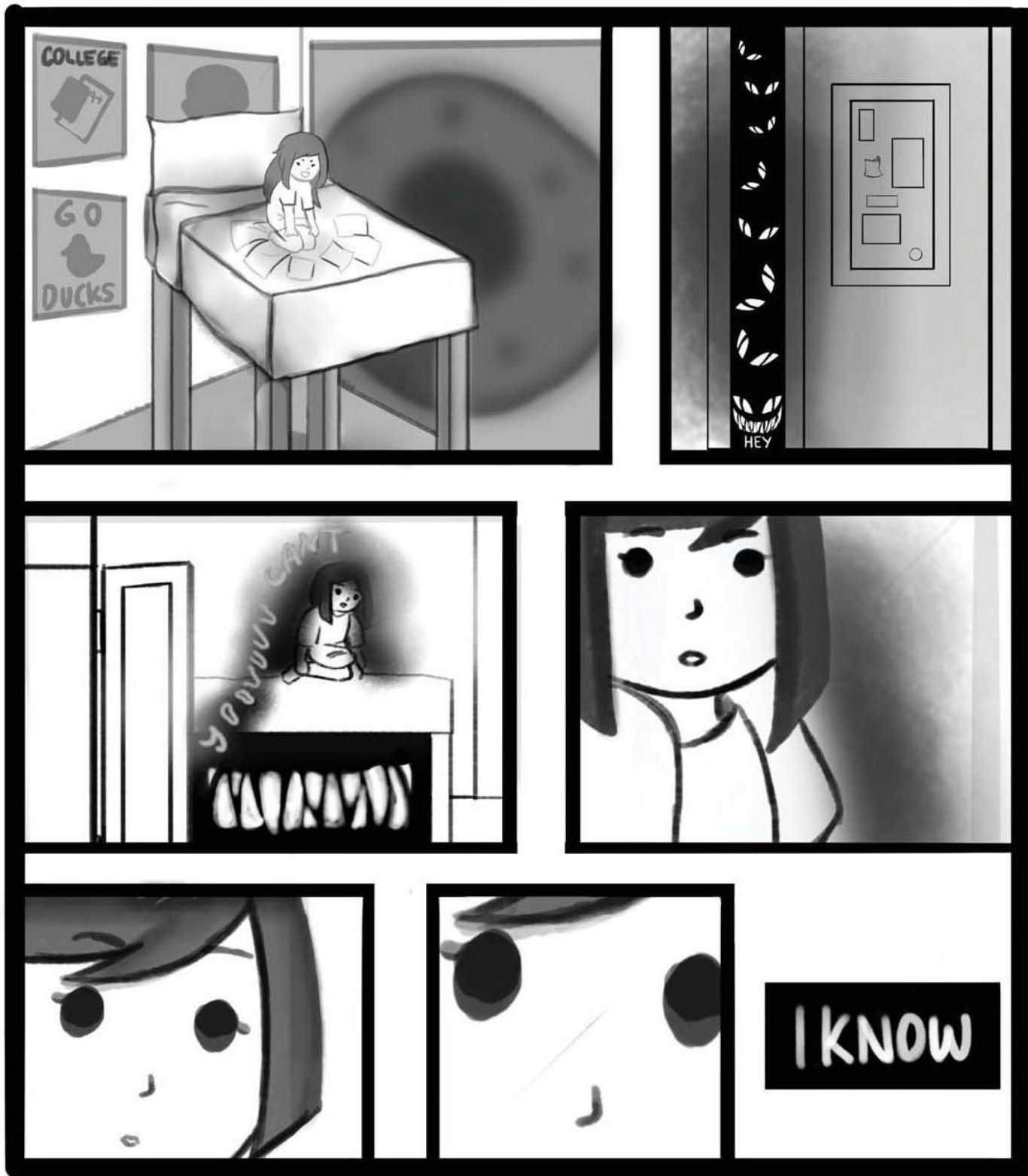




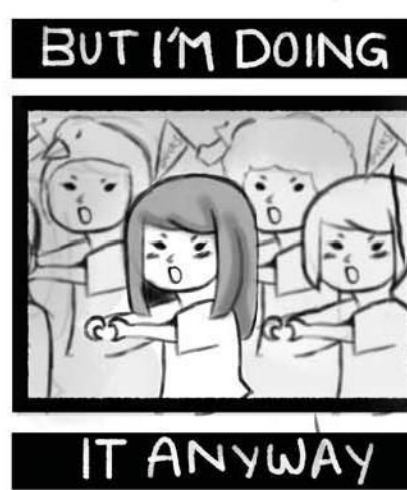
I Can't



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SPIDER-MAN IS A LOSER

The Story of a Boy in a World of Heroes and Failed Expectations

by Eric Schucht



Expectations are one of, if not the hardest thing to keep in check. It's easy to undercut or oversell yourself on things. My expectations far exceed reality, and then I fail. Spectacularly. I try and fail and things don't quite turn out as planned. The internship I got isn't as interesting as I once thought. I never heard back from that I job I applied for. The girl I like didn't laugh at my joke. All disappointments, but I've learned it's best to be a realist while never losing sight of the bright side of things. That's a lesson I learned from Spider-Man and a lesson my father learned from me.

In pop culture, heroes are idealized, especially the super kind. Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman are characters that are the American equivalent of the Greek Pantheon. These superheroes signify the moral high ground we strive for in this country.

They are the new idols of worship that teach their followers right from wrong. But just like cats and dogs, there are two main houses of comic fandom that are at constant opposition with each other. The characters of D.C. are gods made man while Marvel's characters are the man made gods. They are our reflection: flawed, outcast, alone. And no one embodies this more than your friendly neighborhood web slinger, Spider-Man. The wall crawling crimson spider was created at the start of the Silver-Age of comics in the 60's when Marvel Comics was starting to rise in popularity. The character, while all mighty and empowered with superhuman strength, had problems that he couldn't solve with being superhuman alone. He struggled with very un-superhero problems. From rejection in dating, working a job he hates, and struggling to pay for his Aunt May's medical bills, Spider-Man never quite catches a break. His problems are very much the same after getting powers as they were before. Thus, he's bouncing from one disappointment to the next. This is something I can relate to on a personal level regarding the people in my own life.

"It's best to be a realist while never losing sight of the bright side of things."

In a lot of ways, my father is like Spider-Man. Both came from impoverished families. Both grew up without a father figure. But while Spider-Man was in the science lab at his school, Dad was captain of his high school football team, playing gateway driver for his friends as they drove around the neighborhood smashing mailboxes. So I guess in that way he's more of a Flash Thompson than a Peter Parker kind of guy. Still, Spider-Man is his favorite superhero, while my Father is mine. My Dad, like most superheroes, never really had a stable father figure growing up. I think in some ways we are attracted to heroes to fulfill a void in our lives. John Wayne, Duke, the badass cowboy with

true grit, was my Father's first super hero. Everything he knew about what a man should be he learned from Duke: Big, gruff, and tough. He learned all of that from seeing Wayne ride off on his horse, pistols in hand on the silver screen. I think there are very few who have a bigger dvd collection of Duke's films than my Dad. Growing up, my Dad said Wayne was like a father figure to him. Well, my dad is my John Wayne. He's a larger than life character to me, although, just like Spider-Man, he does have his flaws.

I think my Dad tried to be the Dad that he would have wanted as kid. While well intentioned, the idea's a bit misguided. We are different, very different. He, the jock, was big, athletic, and popular. I am a bit nerdy, definitely not athletic, and the worst sin of all, not a fan of football. This is my Dad's religion. Sports are everything to him, but they're not everything to me. I was raised to be the athlete I couldn't nor ever wanted to be. I don't recall ever mentioning wanting to be an athlete, but somehow I ended up on the track to be one. I was gonna be a jock just like my Dad. Too bad I was the Peter Parker to his Flash Thompson. I hated sports. Never liked them, never will. In third grade, the first and only year I played football, I hid in a closet before most practices, just to avoid going. It didn't work. I remember that even years later my Father still lamented about if he would have had me start playing football in the fourth grade, if I was just a bit bigger, then I'd have a blast and be a joke just like him. But unfortunately for Dad, reality rarely meets your expectations. The problem wasn't that I didn't like sports; the problem was that I wasn't him. After that, he accepted that I was never going to be him, although I don't ever think he really understood why that was the case. Still, he never gave up on finding something to bond over. I will always appreciate how he never gave up on trying to connect with his son. For the most parts, camping and hiking with the Boy Scouts filled the need for connection. Today, that void is filled by comics, movies, and movies about comics.

"I think in some ways we are attracted to heroes to fulfill a void in our lives."

Comics were one of the few bridges that connected my Dad and I. Dad always talked about his collection of old Spider-Man comics. There was always a sigh the hung in the air when he mentioned

my Grandmother selling them to the neighbor kid when he went off to school. He was only able to save a handful of comics. Not worth much, but their sentimental value outweighs any price. That's why when my folks even hinted at selling my video game collection, I smuggled them out. Now they're locked up tight in the Fort Knox that is my bedroom my closet. To my future kid, this pile of old Nintendo games is your heritage.

"Comics were one of the few bridges that connected my Dad and I."

One day, Dad saw a picture of several Storm-troopers and other various Star Wars cosplayers. It was an ad for the Portland Comic Book Festival. An opportunity to relive my Dad's childhood? We were going. And we ended up going on three of four occasions, sometimes with my friends tagging along, sometimes just the two of us. It was at one of these conventions that my dad bought a four volume set of the original Spider-Man comics. The compilation was published by Barnes and Noble and was a bit worn around the edges. The guy at the booth was a bit surprised by my



dad's interest in the set and we got all four for \$20. I think my dad read through part of the first one, but for the most part, they were relegated to the bookcase in my room. There they sat until I finally took take a look at them years later during winter term of my freshman year at college. Cramped in my room, I read through the first two volumes of the original Spider-Man comic and lost interest halfway through the third. It was both interesting and boring. Both relatable and dated.

“Cramped in my room, I read through the first two volumes of the original Spider-Man comic and lost interest halfway through the third.”

Since reading Spider-Man, I realized that the original hasn't aged as well as comic enthusiast would like you to believe. It's not bad, just dated. Really, really dated. I'm not an artist, so I can't speak too much to the art style. All I know is Jack Kirby is iconic. His style was influential in the comic world, but isn't so grand compared to modern stuff. I guess it's one of those things you have to judge by the standards of the time. Still, it makes you appreciate modern coloring and shading techniques a lot more. The main thing that bugs me about the classic Spider-Man is the writing. I don't know if the target audience was for small children or if this just how comics were written back then, but the dialogue is repetitive. Whenever someone gets punch, one character goes, “Oh, I'm gonna punch you,” while the other replies, “Ah, I'm getting punched.” It's as if the artist had no faith that the audience would be able to figure out what was going on. It's a bit annoying, but not too annoying.

The best part of Spider-Man, in my opinion, is how he is loser. A big, fat, loser. And no, I don't mean how he's an introverted nerd. I mean he loses. A lot. Spider-Man doesn't see himself as a hero in the original comics. In fact, he refers to himself as an “adventurer,” never a hero. In the first couple of issues, Spider-Man's main priority isn't saving the day but making some quick cash. He wins money at a wrestling contest and then appears on tv talk shows. In issue 2 he even tries to join the fantastic four in order to /pays the bills and scraps the idea when he discovers they're a non-profit. Not really sure making money would be the first thing I'd do if I got super powers, but okay. Then Uncle Ben dies, blah blah blah, you know the rest. But the most important rule I've learned from reading the comics is

this: Spider-Man never wins. Not really.

Rarely does Spider-Man ever get a complete victory. Whether it's sacrificing a relationship to fight crime, or sacrificing the glory of saving the day to help his sick aunt May (who is always sick, mind you), the guy never catches a break. Classmates hate him, the press vilifies him, and he's always alone. He even starts to take out his anger on The Human Torch, who is made to be his rival in the early comics. The Human Torch is famous, loved, has no need for a secret identity, and always gets the girl. A total joke. Spider-Man, a nerd who is despised by everyone, can never keep a girl for long, forced to hide his identity or be imprisoned. Even at work he is unappreciated. He has to take photos of himself like a cam girl and sells them to the paper of J. Jonah Jameson in order to support his Aunt May (who is on her deathbed every other issue). Jameson despises Spider-Man out of jealousy and ego. So whenever Spider-Man does manage to save the day, the press does a smear job to make him look like the villain or give credit to someone else. There's even an issue where Jameson funds the creation of the villain “the Scorpion” whose job is to kill Spider-Man. The guy goes crazy, attacks a bunch of people, and at the end of it all, Jameson takes the credit for Spider-Man defeating the monstrosity. Talk about fake news.

“The best part of Spider-Man, in my opinion, is how he is loser.”

If you wanna get an idea of what I'm talking about, then you should watch the latest Marvel movie. Spider-Man: Homecoming is the closest film to capturing the spirit of the comics. It's probably what the original spider man would look like if put in a modern setting. It's realistic. This Peter Parker feels like an actual high school student. He isn't some thirty year old pretending to be one. The main problem with The Amazing Spider-Man, and it's a weird complaint, is that Peter Parker is too cool. I think the movie youtube channel Screen Junkies with their series Honest Trailers says it best with the line “Peter Parker, who is an attractive, intelligent, likeable, athletic, well dressed teenage loser.” Andrew Garfield is too cool, but Tom Holland has just the correct amount of dorkiness to get it right. If you want to experience the original Spider-Man, then this movie is for you. It captures the comics by showing that Spider-Man sucks at being Spider-Man. His heart's in the right place, but he messes up all the time, fails to get the girl, and is still

unpopular at the movie's end. He's not despised like in the comics, just unnoticed. His expectations always fail him. Things never quite turn out as hoped. And in the end, he never gets a total victory. The price of being a hero means losing. Now this is a hero I can relate to.

“In life, as I’m sure Spider-Man can attest to, there is no such thing as a total victory, as life really has no end point.”

After watching *Homecoming* twice, it reminded me of the comics and the lesson I learned from them. Seeing Parker fail reminded me of my own experiences. The idea of wanting things to turn out positively, and in the end, having them not. Was this what my dad felt after my last football game? Maybe. In any case, I’ve learned that I need to be realistic in my expectations and I am not afraid to change them when the situation calls for it. In life, as I’m sure Spider-Man can attest to, there is no such thing as a total victory, as life really has no end point. People just keep on going from adventure to adventure with many victories and defeats along the way. So I’m going to try to be like my father’s hero and never give up. I’m going to take things one day at a time and be me. Because in the end, that’s all we really can do.



GIL ROY

By Mark Rempel

20 minutes ago, I woke up with a pair of gills, and no lungs.

I was losing consciousness by the time it occurred to me that I needed water in order to breathe

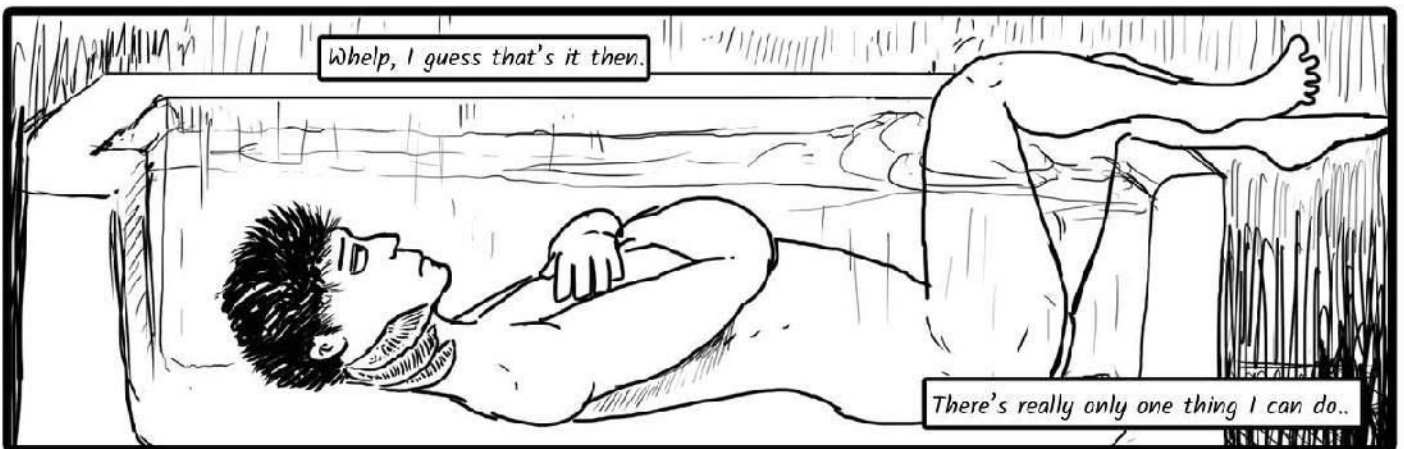
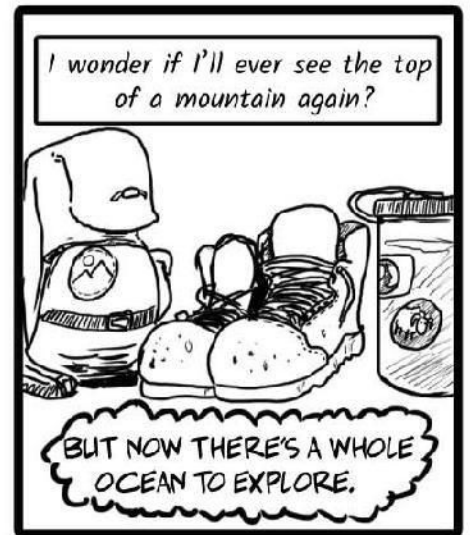
It was bad.

And I've just been hanging out ever since..

I used the sink at first, but then filled up the tub so I could relax

incoming call from:
LARA WALLIS

I tried to make a phone call earlier, but my voice just sounded like a dying fish. I'd rather not do that again.





AND SO IT WAS SETTLED

I WOULD GIVE UP
MY FORMER LIFE,
AND EMBRACE THE
TEMPTATION OF
THE SEA.

IT WAS THE ULTIMATE
OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING
GOOD FOR THE WORLD.

TODAY I FIGHT FOR THE
RIGHTS OF THE SEA
AND ALL WHO DWELL
BENEATH HER
LOVING WAVES

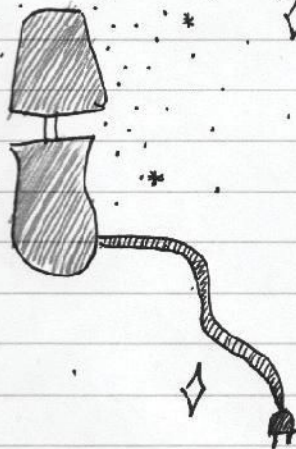
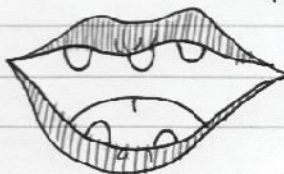
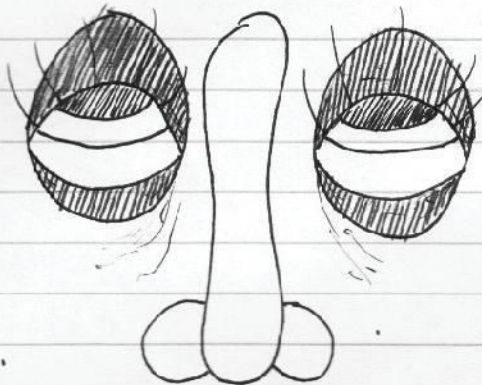
BUT AS I PATROL THIS REEF
FOR ILLEGAL FISHING I HAVE
TO WONDER....

IS MY HEART REALLY IN THIS?

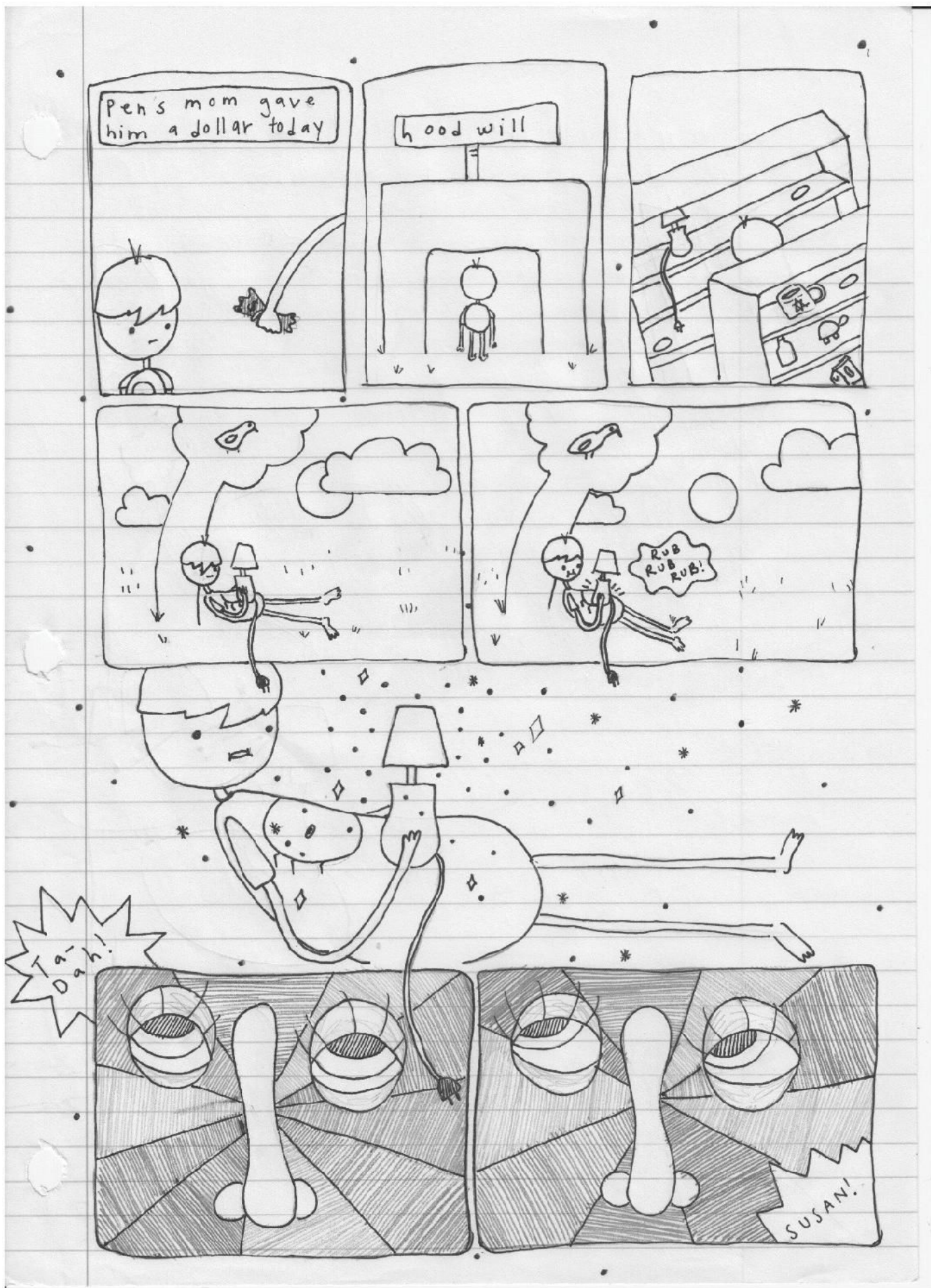
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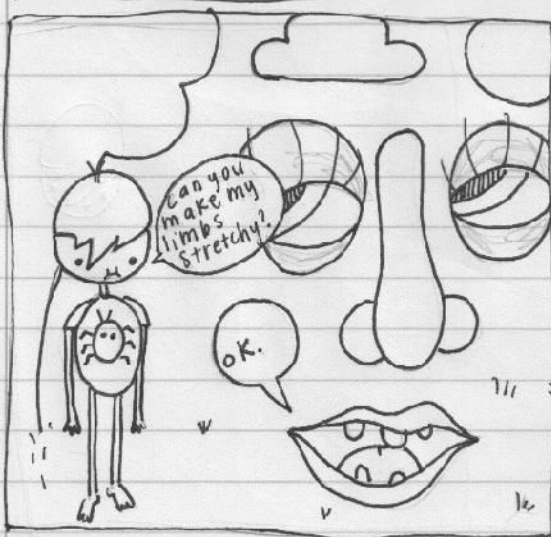
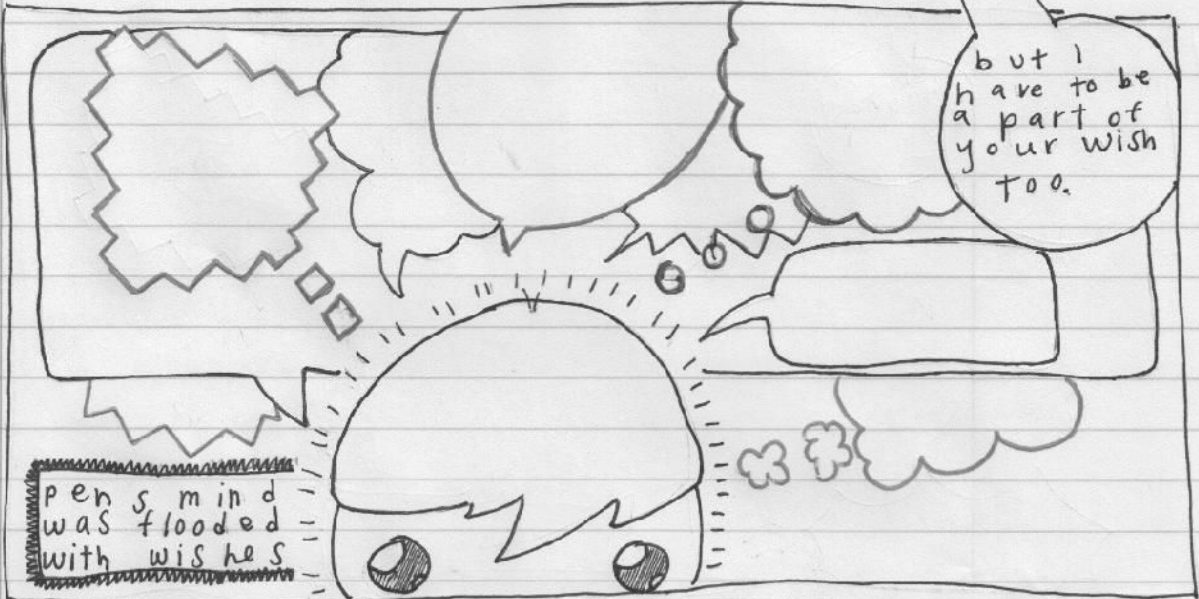
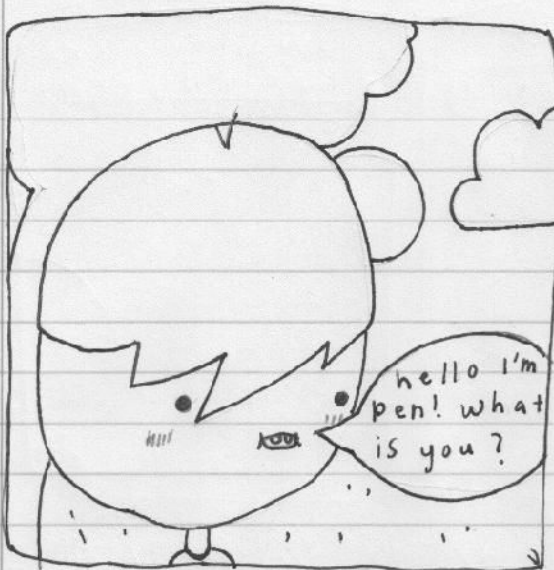


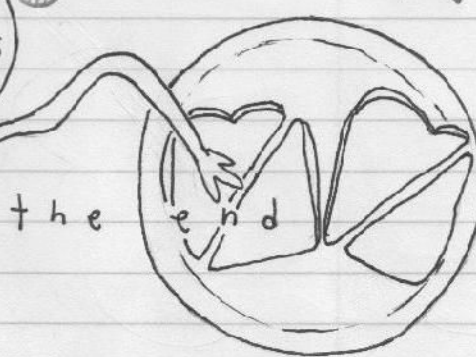
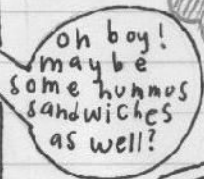
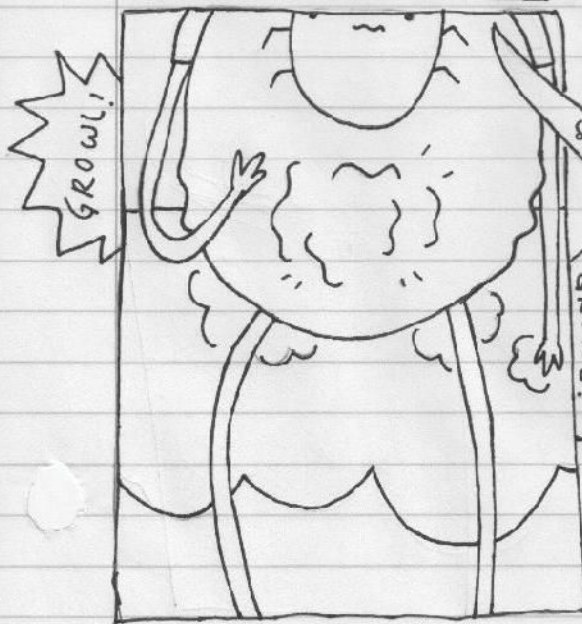
Sue & Pen



a short comic
by lauren allen



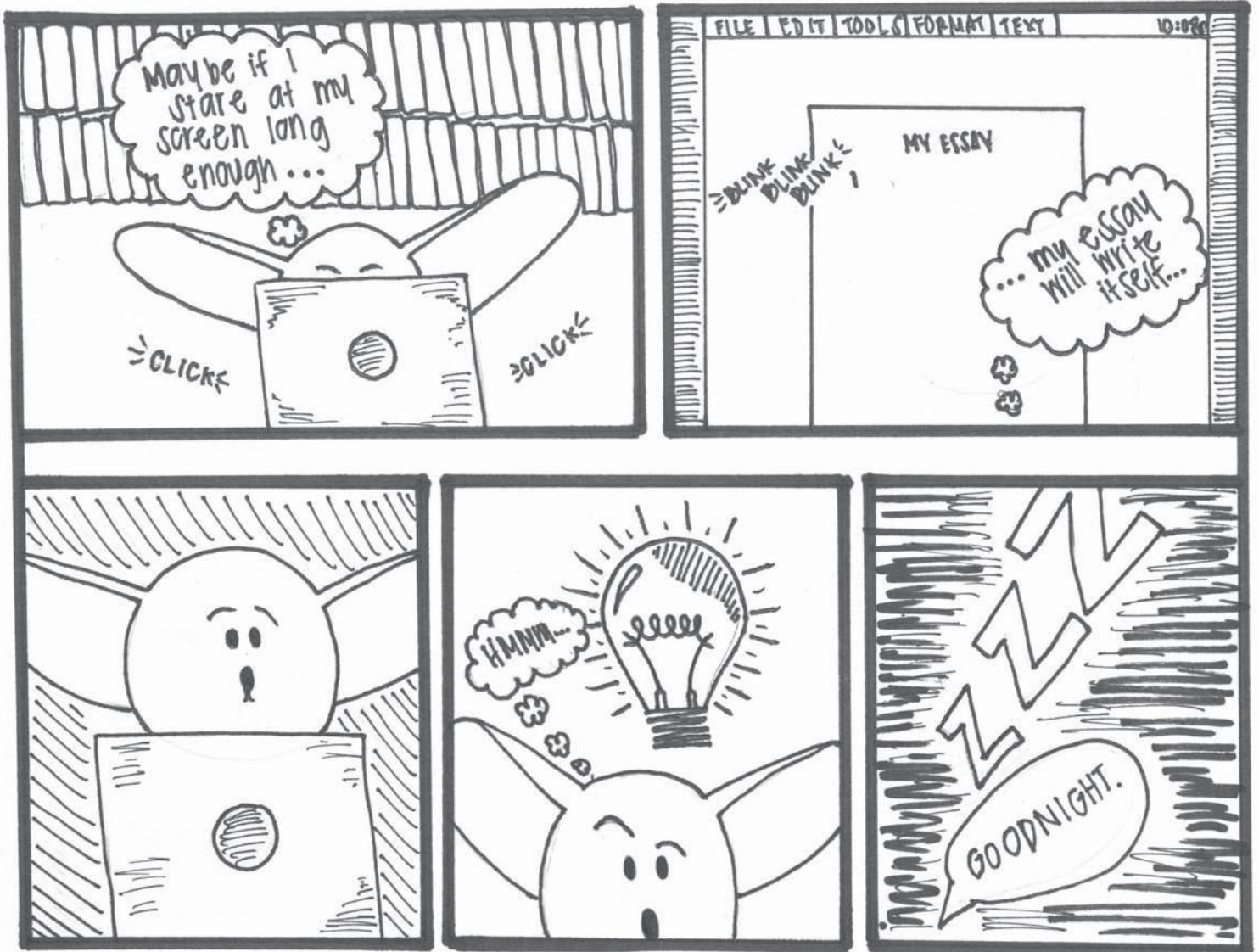




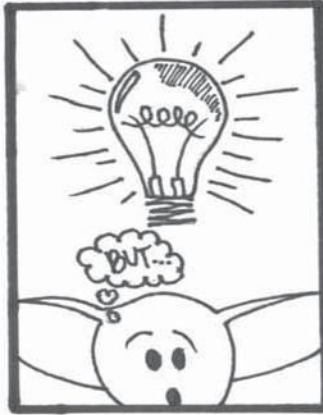
Mouse College

by Hano Nakakura

"HOW TO COLLEGE 101"



"How to procrastinate 101"



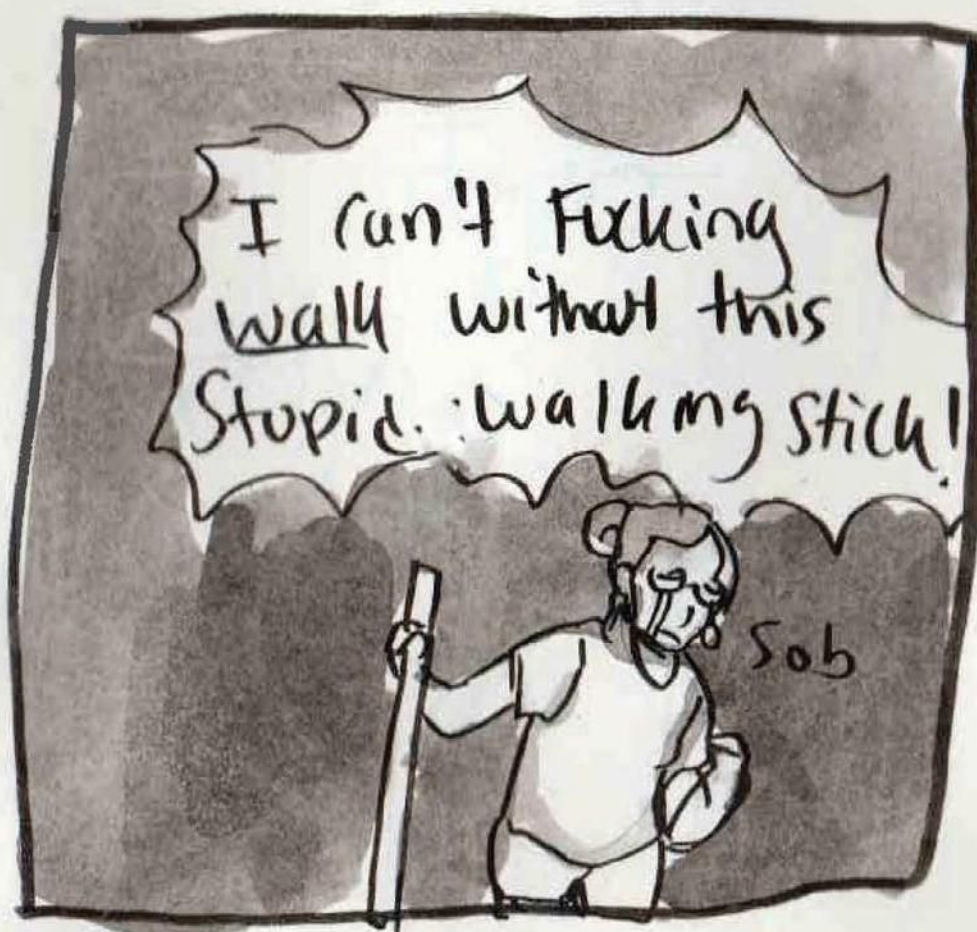
"How to college-logro 101"













MARVEL AND BEYOND

An Interview with Roland Paris

Conducted by Ash Short

Roland Paris is a comic artist who has worked as an inker for Marvel for around thirteen years, and with other companies before that. He has worked on series such as Amazing Spider-man, Runaways, and Generation Hope. Currently, he is working on his own series called Voodoo Kiss, which he is writing and drawing.



Art Ducko: What were your original hopes and aspirations when joining Marvel, and were they met?

Roland Paris: My original aspirations were just to get to work on some of the really cool characters that I grew up reading—like Spiderman, X-Men, and The Hulk—and I actually got to work on those characters. I got to work on pretty much all my favorite characters except for maybe Moon Knight, Iron Fist, and Captain America, but I touched base on most of the Marvel universe. It was really cool.

AD: Do you feel any pressure working for such a large company and taking responsibility for such famous characters and their stories?

RP: A little. You definitely have to step up to the plate and give it your best effort. You don't want to turn in bad work because not only does that not get you any more work, but you can disappoint readers...I remember when I was reading early on, I often found a sub-par art effort in some issues. I was very disappointed because, being an artist, I really liked books that had great art and could also tell a story well. When that really wasn't met it was very disappointing to me as a reader.

AD: When you started inking, did you feel more confident that you were producing work you wanted the readers to see?

RP: In a way, I wanted the art to be as good as it could be. I sometimes see inkers that put far too much of

their own style into a book that they're working on—whose work screams that inker; you could see that inker's influence over whoever they're inking instead of just making that penciler look as best as they can. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to be the inker that somebody would pick up a book and say, "Wow, this penciler really, really stepped up his game. This is the best I've seen him or her look in a very long time." I didn't want someone to pick up a book and say, "Oh, Roland inked this, I can tell right off." That just isn't something that an inker is supposed to do in my opinion. He's supposed to enhance and improve on the pencils, but not overshadow the pencils.

"I wanted to be the inker that somebody would pick up a book and say, 'Wow, this penciler really, really stepped up his game. This is the best I've seen him or her look in a very long time.'"

AD: Why did you choose to be an inker, or how did you end up with that job?

RP: It was really just happenstance. I really wanted to be a penciler; I think we all do. All the artists that work in comics want to be pencilers. I had met some guys that were starting off a very small press book. This was very early on, I think this was the early 90's, and I met them at a convention in Mississippi. One was a writer and the other two of them were pencilers, and they were like "Well, we're already putting out two books, we've already got two pencilers, but we need an inker. Do you want to give that a shot?" I said, "Sure, let me give it a shot. I've never done it before but let me try." So, they sent me some sample pages, and I did some really awful stuff to the work but for some reason they liked it enough to say, "Yeah, that's good. You're an inker now." So, I worked on four issues, two over one penciller and two over the guy. Then I decided I wanted to go to art school and I stopped working with them. After college, I found that inking over another artist's pencils was a little less frustrating than actually penciling, because all the grunt work was already done—all of the perspective work, all of the storytelling—that was all taken care of. I was able to go in as an inker and

make it shine, make it look as best as it possibly could. It was just kind of zen—just rewarding.

AD: How did you end up at Marvel?

RP: After college, it took me a few years to get back into the industry and I started working with small press companies—Chaos! Comics—and then I got hired on by Top Cow and did some work for Image. And then I got hired on by a company called Cross-Gen, which was out of Tampa, Florida. So, I moved down to Tampa because they were an in-studio company. All the artists worked in the same company, and in the same warehouse studio which is really cool because most comic companies worked through email or by FedEx and stuff like that. And I was there for three and a half years. The first three years were awesome, but the last half of the year was horrible because the company started to go bankrupt. When the company finally did tank, Joe Quesada, who was the editor and chief of Marvel at the time, flew down to Tampa, brought us all out to dinner, and at the end of the dinner, he basically said, "You all have jobs with Marvel. It's just yours to keep, but you have a job there. We will find something for you to do." So that's kind of how I fell into working for Marvel. And I've worked with them pretty much on-and-off for about thirteen years now.

"It's not tracing. That is the main thing. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people over the years quote to me the line from Chasing Amy, 'You're just a tracer!' I love Kevin Smith's work, he's a great guy, but I also hate him for that five minutes of film—the opening of Chasing Amy—because that's what everybody thinks inkers do."

AD: When you're given a page to ink, how do you approach it?

RP: I usually start just by ruling the borders, and then I look over what the penciler has done and I try to

assess what needs to be emphasized, what needs to be the prominent thing that's going to catch the reader's eye, and which panel is going to be the most important out of all of them on the page. Then I start working on a little part of the background, and then I'll do some figure work, go back to backgrounds, then finally wrap it up by adding all the solid blacks, and filling in all the large black spots with the ink.

AD: What do you wish people knew about inking?

RP: That it's not tracing. That is the main thing. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people over the years quote to me the line from *Chasing Amy*, "You're just a tracer!" I love Kevin Smith's work, he's a great guy, but I also hate him for that five minutes of film—the opening of *Chasing Amy*—because that's what everybody thinks inkers do. They think we trace, but we have to know how to draw, and if a penciler has been rushed, we have to know how to go in and correct perspective and anatomy. And we also have to do it in a way that doesn't take away from the penciler's style. And again, we also have to enhance that work and make some figures pop forward, make some things recede in the background. So, it's a lot of little intricacies that most people don't realize we're actually doing.

"I had found I was starting to get less and less inspired to work with somebody else and not do my own art."

AD: What creative freedom is there for an inker?

RP: It really depends on the book you're working on, and it actually depends more on the penciler that you're working on. Some inkers will be given a lot more freedom over other inkers. It all just depends on how much experience they have, and it also depends on the penciler and the editor and on how well they know your work and whether they know you're going to do solid work. Sometimes you are given pages that are very finished and there's not a lot of creative input that goes into those pages. Some pencilers know you and will allow you to take their stuff and do what you want with it. That can have some freedom and allow you to express some of your artistic abilities; you

can just play with it and try to make it look as best as you can. But with those guys that are super tight, those pages can kind of be a little mundane at times just because that's when it does become tracing, since they've done everything on the page and you're not able to put as much your own into it.

AD: So, we heard you were making your own original comic! Can you tell us a bit about it?

RP: When I was at CrossGen, I came up with an idea off the cuff as a joke. But Chuck Dixon, who is an amazing writer—he has done a ton of stuff for Marvel and DC and he was the creator of Bane for Batman—told me the idea was actually pretty cool and I should think about it. It rattled in my brain for about fifteen years and I got to the point where I started getting a little frustrated just being an inker. So I started developing the idea. Then about a year and a half ago I decided it was time for me to do the book. So, I've been working on it for a while, writing and pencilling and inking it. I'm going to have a friend color it, and some other friends letter it. And once it's done, I'm going to send it to publishers and hopefully a publisher will pick it up. If nobody picks it up, I'll Kickstart it. The basic idea of the book is this: it's set in the late 1890's in New Orleans in an area called the Storyville District, which was New Orleans red light prostitution district that was only legal for about fifteen, sixteen years. So, it's set in that area and it's a supernatural detective story, so it's completely different than all of the superhero stuff that I've worked on over the years as an inker. And that's kind of the basis of it. It's going to be called *Voodoo Kiss*.

AD: We heard that you were doing the bulk of the work. How has that been?

RP: The hardest part was writing it since I have never fully written anything, especially a finished, complete script. That was the toughest thing to overcome—Then getting visual references and doing lots of research about the New Orleans Storyville District and the different houses. I found out they actually had sort of like a shopping guide that they would hand out to people that would come to the city. It was called the *Blue Book* and it listed all the houses and then it gave a breakdown of all the prostitutes and what their specialties were, and whether or not they were rip-offs. And then I also had to research voodoo and all lot of supernatural stuff within the New Orleans area and ghosts

and stuff. Now I've got that taken care off, and I'm in the breakdown stages of doing all of the full size pages on a smaller scale just to work out the panel order and the storytelling. I should be finishing with that pretty soon. Then I'm going to start doing the full size pages, penciling and inking them. And when that's all done, I'll ship it off to my colorist. And once he's done with that, it goes to the letterers and then we'll start sending the packages to companies. It's been fun.

"I'm the creator of this universe. I am not playing with someone else's toys; I am making my own toys."

AD: What made you decide it was time to start making your own comics?

RP: I think the main thing was, after twenty years of being an inker, I had found I was starting to get less and less inspired to work with somebody else and not do my own art. It got to the point where I said, "Okay, I've done this, time to do something new." I wanted to challenge myself and get back to doing my own art and drawing more. And I just decided, "Okay, I need to challenge myself. I need to do this. This has been bumping around my head for fifteen years. It's time to do it." And I took the leap and I semi-retired from working for Marvel and started working on my own book.

AD: In what ways does working independently differ from working at Marvel?

RP: Well, the big difference right now is there's no deadlines. That's a huge difference. When you're working for a company like Marvel or DC, you have to get twenty pages done in a month. As an inker, that usually turns into about two and a half or three weeks. Typically, the pencilers and writers—mostly the pencilers—tend to be a little late. They get the kid glove treatment and then the deadline gets tighter and tighter for the inkers, and even tighter for colorists, and again even tighter for the letterers. The biggest difference now is that I don't have to worry about deadlines. I can work on it on my own pace and just enjoy it, whereas working for Marvel and DC I had super long nights working long hours. I worked twelve to fifteen hours

on a page at times. And then I got a couple hours of sleep and went right back at it. So that's the biggest difference.

AD: Does your art feel more personal to you when you've created the story behind it? Or do you feel like you can also contribute to making Marvel stories and characters your own?

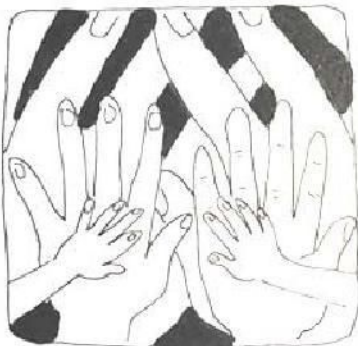
RP: I can, to a degree, make the characters my own because I am part of the process so it is part of me, but definitely writing and creating my own characters and stories is much more personal to me. I found it's become much more fulfilling as an artist to do everything from scratch. I'm the creator of this universe. I am not playing with someone else's toys; I am making my own toys. I'm not complaining; I'm enjoying it and it's also given me the freedom to explore painting again. Early on, when I was in college I was doing a lot of painting. Now because I don't have deadlines—crunches and stuff like that—I'm able to say, "Okay, I'm going to work on the book this week and next week I'm going



to do a painting.” I’m exploring parts of my creative heart that haven’t been touched in twenty years. So that’s been the greatest surprise from doing this, because I can go, “Yeah I haven’t done this in a long time, let me do that!” I’ve done some sculptures and a lot of paintings. I’ve been doing large paintings and I’m just really enjoying it. As an inker, sometimes you get two and a half weeks to do twenty pages and that’s not a lot of time. I’ve had times where I’ve had to literally soak my hands in cold water for about fifteen to twenty minutes after doing each page just so I can work the next day because my hands would swell up. And now I don’t have to worry about that because I can work at my own pace. One thing I get asked a lot is, “What was your favorite project as an inker?” I worked on an adaptation of Homer’s *Odyssey* and Marvel published that. It was something that I read quite often in grade school and high school. I loved the whole broad scope of it, and when they offered me the job, I was ecstatic. One, it was the *Odyssey*, and two, it was adapted by one of my all-time favorite writers—a guy named Roy Thomas who was famous for writing *Conan* and *The Avengers*. For pretty much every Marvel put out in the 70’s, he was one of the main writers. He was just one of my heroes as I was growing up and creating. Finally, the pencils were done by a guy from Brazil that I absolutely loved working with. I had worked with him at CrossGen for a little while and I worked with him at one issue of *Miss Marvel* at Marvel, and he got hired on as a penciler. It was just the perfect match for the three of us. It was just a great work; that by far is my favorite project in twenty years. It’s a little bit of an odd choice, but, artists have never been known to be completely normal.



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by Kaitlyn McCafferty

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by Alyssa Cendejas

DUCK STRIPS

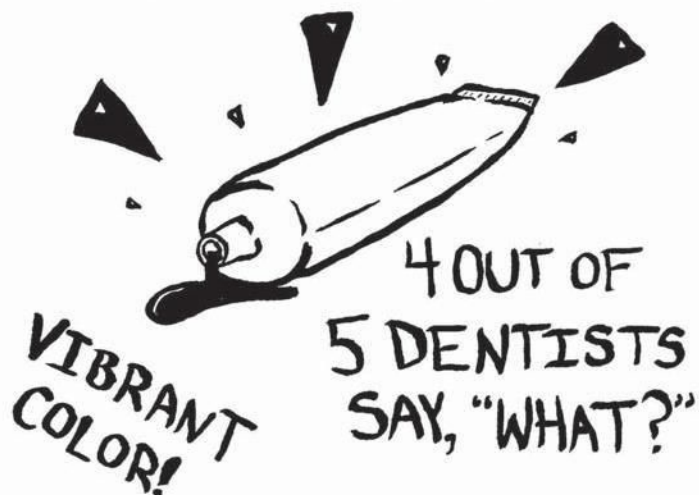


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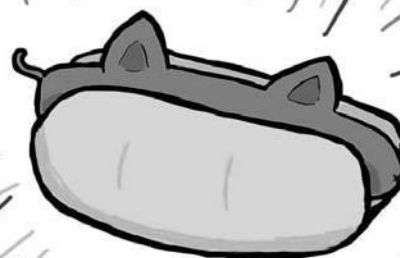
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